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California could offer electric vehicle rebates if Trump eliminates tax credit, Newsom says



California Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks during a press conference in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024.

(AP Photo/Eric Thayer, File)

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— California could offer rebates for electric vehicle purchases if the incoming Trump administration eliminates a federal tax credit for people who buy electric cars, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday.

Newsom, a Democrat, will propose creating a new version of the state's Clean Vehicle Rebate Program, which was phased out in 2023 after funding 594,000 cars and saving 456 million gallons of fuel, Newsom's of-

fice said.

"Consumers continue to prove the skeptics wrong — zero-emission vehicles are here to stay," Newsom said in a statement. "We're not turning back on a clean transportation future — we're going to make it more affordable for people to drive vehicles that don't pollute." Newsom's proposal is part of his plan to protect California's progressive policies ahead of Republican President-elect Donald Trump's second term. He called the state Legislature to convene

in a special session to help "Trump-proof" state laws by giving the attorney general's office more funding to fight federal challenges.

But a budget shortfall could complicate California's resistance efforts. Early budget projections show the state could face a \$2 billion deficit next year, according to a report released last week by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. That's an improvement from an estimated \$46.8 billion deficit the state faced last year, but the shortfall could still curtail the state's ability to expand new programs and fight federal legal challenges. Legislative leaders in both chambers have said the state needs to stay prudent in anticipation of future budget deficits.

Money for the new rebate system could come from the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which is funded by polluters under the state's cap-and-trade program, the governor's office said.

Officials didn't say how much the program would cost or

how the rebates would work. Newsom is expected to offer more details of the possible rebate program during an appearance in Kern County later Monday.

California has surpassed 2 million zero-emission vehicles sold, according to Newsom's office. The state has passed policies in recent years to transition away from fossil fuel-powered cars, trucks, trains and lawn mowers. Trump previously vowed to end federal electric vehicle tax credits, which are worth up to \$7,500 for new zero-emission vehicles. There's also a \$4,000 credit for

used ones. But Trump later softened his stance as Tesla CEO Elon Musk became a supporter and adviser.

Newsom said at a news conference last week that he called Trump after the election and the incoming president hasn't returned his call.

California's defunct Clean Vehicle Rebate Program offered rebates on electric cars as high as \$2,500.

Any new rebate program "would include changes to promote innovation and competition" in the zero-emission vehicles market, the statement said. □

White Florida woman sentenced to 25 years in prison for shooting Black neighbor in lengthy dispute



Defendant Susan Lorincz takes notes during her trial Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2024, in Ocala, Fla.

(Doug Engle/Ocala Star-Banner via AP, Pool)

By Curt Anderson

Associated Press

(AP) - A white Florida woman who fatally shot a Black neighbor through her front door during an ongoing dispute over the neighbor's boisterous children faces sentencing Monday for her manslaughter conviction. Susan Lorincz, 60, was convicted in August of killing 35-year-old Ajike "A.J." Owens by firing a single shot from her .380-caliber handgun in June 2023. Lorincz faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in state prison because a firearm was used.

The shooting was the culmination of a long-running argument between the two neighbors over Owens' children playing in a grassy area at both of their houses in Ocala, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Orlando.

Prosecutors said Owens had come to Lorincz's home after her children complained that she had thrown roller skates and an umbrella at them, which Lorincz denied. Trial testimony showed Owens, a mother of four young children, was pounding on Lorincz's door and yelling, leading Lorincz to claim self-defense in shooting her neighbor.

Lorincz told detectives in a videotaped interview that she feared for her life. She also said she had been harassed for most of the three years she lived in the neighborhood.

"I thought I was in imminent danger," she said.

But jurors did not agree with her self-defense claim.

Owens' family pushed for the maximum prison sentence after Lorincz was convicted by an all-white jury. □

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Senators took down one Trump Cabinet pick. But the fight over their authority is just beginning

By Stephen Groves
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a short phrase in the Constitution, mentioned in passing. But it's already taking on an outsize significance as President-elect Donald Trump charts his return to office. The withdrawal of Matt Gaetz as Trump's nominee for attorney general dramatically affirmed that the Senate still maintains its "advice and consent" powers when it comes to vetting and installing a president's Cabinet. Yet it may be only a brief reprieve from the intense struggles to come as Senate Republicans try to preserve their constitutional role.

Trump has been making his Cabinet announcements at a rapid clip, often over social media, and frequently catching GOP senators off guard.

Gaetz's selection on Nov. 13, in particular, left Republicans shocked and momentarily dumbfounded. His withdrawal just over a week later came just as suddenly, leaving many grasping for words.

Within hours, Trump had moved on, announcing on social media that he had selected another loyalist, former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, to run the Justice Department. Over the weekend, Trump filled out the rest of his Cabinet selections.

The dizzying speed of the picks has given Trump's second term in office a bracing start, a show of force from a president-elect who has made clear he intends to fill his administration with officials who are willing to upend the ways of Washington.

His desire to pack the government with loyalists and wield executive power in expansive ways seems certain to result in frequent clashes with Congress, even with Republicans in control.

"From what I'm hearing from my Republican colleagues on everything from defense secretary to other posts, it sounds like they are



The Capitol is seen on Nov. 14, 2024, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Mariam Zuhaib, File)



Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Mo., speaks with reporters at the Capitol in Washington, Sept. 25, 2024.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File)

ready to roll over for Mr. Trump," Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat, said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Republican senators are choosing their words carefully as they size up Trump's proposed Cabinet, while also issuing gentle reminders about their role in the confirmation process.

"The constitutional directive is clear, and it does not change based upon the personalities involved," said Sen. Mike Rounds, a South Dakota Republican. "The way I approach it, the president has a responsibility to make nominations, and we give him the benefit of the doubt, but we do have a responsibility for 'advice and consent.'"

Gaetz's nomination was

sunk after Republican senators had privately become wary of a volatile confirmation hearing amid allegations he had sex with an underage girl. As many as four to six GOP senators were signaling their reservations, according to one outgoing Republican senator, Mike Braun of Indiana, though the number was certainly higher.

With Democrats ready to oppose Cabinet nominees they view as unqualified and extreme, Trump's margin for error is narrow. Republicans are set to have a 53-47 majority in the next Senate, so defections from just four Republicans would mean defeat for any nominee that doesn't enjoy bipartisan support.

Other Cabinet picks also

face a complicated path to confirmation. Trump's transition team has so far not signed the requisite agreements that allow the FBI to screen his personnel choices, sending nominees before the Senate without the typical vetting that happens beforehand.

So far, Trump's nominees have included for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, a Fox News personality who was accused of sexual assault, which he denies; for secretary for health and human services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who has also faced allegations of sexual misconduct as well as concern about his opposition to vaccines; and for national intelligence director, Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democratic House member who has echoed Russian propaganda and talking points. Those picks fall outside the Republican mainstream and are a notable departure from when Trump entered the White House the first time and mostly chose from the ranks of Republican officials well-respected across Washington.

"The Constitution gives us a role in personnel called 'advice and consent,'" said Sen. Mitch McConnell, the outgoing Senate Republican leader who will remain in office next year. "My view is that's exactly

what will unfold here when these nominees are actually sent forward, and we will treat them like we've treated all others with proper vetting."

Still, Trump's allies argue that senators need to be ready to confirm the Cabinet, no matter who is chosen.

"The president deserves to be able to put people in place who will do what he campaigned on, which is to disrupt, and the establishment is concerned, and they probably should be," said Sen. Eric Schmitt, a Missouri Republican, adding, "I fully support President Trump's ability to pick his people to go do that."

After Gaetz's withdrawal, Trump supporters on social media and in activist circles circulated the names of Republicans they believed were holding out support. Charlie Kirk, whose conservative youth organization Turning Points Action worked closely with the Trump campaign, is already organizing a "grassroots army" to pressure senators to confirm his nominees.

That might not even matter. Trump has also demanded that Senate Republicans agree to allow him to make recess appointments, a process whereby the Senate would adjourn so that Trump could use a constitutional power to make appointments while the chamber is in recess. Sen. John Thune, who will take over as Senate majority leader in January, has kept that option on the table, saying he would be inclined to use it if Democrats try to delay confirmations. It would be unprecedented in modern times for the Senate to step aside willingly to allow the president to make top-level Cabinet appointments. Experts say it would amount to surrendering the chamber's constitutional power over Cabinet choices.

"It's crystallized the choices for Senate Republicans," said Sarah Binder, a political scientist at George Washington University. □

G7 foreign ministers push for Israel-Hezbollah cease-fire in final G7 of Biden administration

FIUGGI, Italy (AP) — Foreign ministers from the world's leading industrialized nations expressed cautious optimism Monday about possible progress on a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah.

The top diplomats met for the final time before a new U.S. administration takes office with wars raging in the Mideast and Ukraine.

"Knock on wood," Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said as he opened the Group of Seven meeting outside Rome. "We are perhaps close to a cease-fire in Lebanon," he said. "Let's hope it's true and that there's no backing down at the last-minute."

A cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon was foremost on the agenda of the G7 meeting in Fiuggi, outside Rome, that gathered ministers from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, in the last G7 encounter of the Biden administration.

For the first time, the G7 ministers were joined by their counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, the so-called "Arab Quintet," as well as the Secretary General of the Arab League.

"Everyone favors a cease-fire in both scenarios," Tajani told reporters, adding that Italy had offered to take on an even greater peacekeeping role in Lebanon to oversee any cease-fire deal.

As the ministers arrived in Italy, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Mike Herzog, told Israeli Army Radio on Monday a ceasefire deal to end fighting between Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah could be reached "within days." Several Arab ministers reiterated calls for a cease-fire in both Lebanon and Gaza during a G7-affiliated conference in Rome.

"We need a cease-fire, a permanent cease-fire. That will stop the killings and stop the destruction and restore a sense of normalcy to life," Jordanian Foreign Minister



From left, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, France's Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Noel Barrot, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly, Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya, Germany's Foreign Affairs Minister Annalena Baerbock, Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell pose for a family photo at the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting in Anagni, central Italy, Monday, Nov. 25, 2024.

(Andreas Solaro/Pool Photo via AP)

Ayman Safadi told the conference.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, for his part, reaffirmed that Cairo would host a minister-level conference next Monday on mobilizing international aid for Gaza.

The so-called "Quintet" has been working with the U.S. to finalize a "day after" plan for Gaza. There is some urgency to make progress before the Trump administration takes over in January. President-elect Donald Trump is expected to pursue a policy that strongly favors Israel over the aspirations of the Palestinians.

Tajani added another item to the G7 agenda last week after the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas' military chief. Italy is a founding member of the court and hosted the 1998 Rome conference that gave birth to it. But Italy's right-wing government has been a strong supporter of Israel after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, while also providing humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza.



Foreign Ministers of the G7 and from different Arab countries wait to pose for a family photo at the G7 of foreign Ministers in Fiuggi, some 70 kilometers south-east of Rome, Monday, Nov. 25, 2024.

(AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino)

The Italian government has taken a cautious line, reaffirming its support and respect for the court but expressing concern that the warrants were politically motivated. The United States, Israel's closest ally, has called the warrants "outrageous."

Tajani acknowledged consensus hadn't been reached among the G7 members but hoped for agreement to have a unified position. He noted that all sides need Netanyahu to make any deal.

"We can also not agree with how his government has led the reaction after

the massacre of Oct. 7, but now we have to deal with Netanyahu to arrive at peace in Lebanon, peace in Palestine," Tajani said. Nathalie Tocci, director of the Rome-based Institute for International Affairs think tank, warned that inserting the ICC warrant into the G7 agenda was risky, since the U.S. is the lone member that is not a signatory to the court and yet tends to dictate the G7 line.

"If Italy and the other (five G7) signatories of the ICC are unable to maintain the line on international law, they will not only erode it anyway but will be act-

ing against our interests," Tocci wrote in La Stampa daily this weekend, recalling Italy's recourse to international law in demanding protection for Italian U.N. peacekeepers who have come under fire in southern Lebanon.

The other major talking point of the G7 meeting is Ukraine, and tensions have only heightened since Russia attacked Ukraine last week with an experimental, hypersonic ballistic missile that escalated the nearly 33-month-old war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the strike was retaliation for Kyiv's use of U.S. and British longer-range missiles capable of striking deeper into Russian territory.

The G7 has been at the forefront of providing military and economic support for Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022 and G7 members are particularly concerned about how a Trump administration will change the U.S. approach. Trump has criticized the billions of dollars that the Biden administration has poured into Ukraine and has said he could end the war in 24 hours, comments that appear to suggest he would press Ukraine to surrender territory that Russia now occupies.

"It's hugely important that this G7, that all colleagues across the G7 continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it lasts," British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said as he arrived. He announced new sanctions on vessels of Russia's "shadow fleet" of ships that are evading sanctions to export Russian oil.

"And we are confident that Ukraine can have the funds and the military equipment and kit to get through 2025," Lammy said. The G7 foreign ministers' meeting, the second of the Italian presidency after ministers gathered in Capri in April, is being held in the medieval town of Fiuggi southeast of Rome, best known for its thermal spas. □

Scuffles in Serbian parliament as deadly station collapse sparks anger at the government

By Dusan Stojanovic
Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Scuffles and fistfights broke out between ruling party and opposition lawmakers in Serbia's parliament on Monday, weeks after a deadly rail station roof collapse that ignited tensions in the Balkan state.

The opposition wanted to discuss who is responsible for the crash that killed 15 people in the northern city of Novi Sad on Nov. 1, while governing officials, who have a majority in Serbia's legislature, sought to adopt a bill on next year's state budget. The opposition displayed a banner showing a red hand print reading "blood is on your hands." The ruling party responded with a banner accusing the opposition of wanting "war while Serbia wants to work." Scuffles erupted when the two sides tried to grab each other's banner. The rail station, a major hub, was recently renovated as part of a Serbian-Chinese partnership. Critics allege that corruption, poor over-



Ruling party lawmakers, opposition members, and some ministers fight during a Serbia's parliament session, which was scheduled to debate the 2025 budget, in Belgrade, Serbia, Monday, Nov. 25, 2024. (AP Photo)

sight and inadequate construction work contributed to the tragedy.

The collapse has fueled widespread anger toward the government and protests, becoming a flashpoint for broader dissatisfaction with Serbia's au-

thoritarian rule. There are growing public demands for transparency while the country undertakes large infrastructure projects, mostly with Chinese state companies.

Serbia's parliament speaker Ana Brnabic on Monday

accused the opposition of wanting to come to power by force with help from outside. "There is not a hint, not a grain of doubt, that these are people who are well organized, who were trained quite well, I believe paid well, to create chaos

in Serbia and destabilize our country," she said.

Serbia's autocratic President Aleksandar Vucic said on Instagram that the "daily bullying" and "the savage behavior" of the opposition would not be tolerated.

"I want to reassure the citizens and tell them that we will respond to their rudeness, rudeness and arrogance with even more work in the future," he said. "Today they tried to prevent pensioners from receiving their increased pensions, public sector employees from their increased salaries. They won't succeed." Opposition leader Dragan Djilas said the speaker had "shut down" the parliament by refusing to allow a debate on who's responsible for the tragedy.

"She started with that when she refused to put on the agenda the request of more than 80 members of the opposition for a debate on confidence in the government because of the murder and crime in Novi Sad," Djilas said. □

Seoul court acquits South Korean opposition leader on charges of instigating perjury

By Kim Tong-Hyung
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung was acquitted on Monday on charges that he persuaded a witness to lie in court to understate Lee's past criminal conviction, in a rare moment of relief from broad legal troubles that threaten to derail his political career. Lee, a firebrand lawmaker and chairperson of the liberal Democratic Party, thanked the Seoul Central District Court judge after the ruling for "bringing back truth and justice." The prosecution didn't immediately say whether it would appeal. The same court earlier this month sentenced Lee to a suspended prison term for violating election law by making false public statements

while running for president in the 2022 election, which he narrowly lost to conservative rival Yoon Suk Yeol. If that conviction stands, Lee would be unseated as a lawmaker and barred from running for president in the next election, for which polls now show him to be the favorite. But Lee, who is facing five different trials over corruption and other charges, will likely challenge any guilty verdict he receives, and it's uncertain whether the Supreme Court would decide on any of the cases before the vote in March 2027.

The more serious charges against Lee are allegations that he provided unlawful favors to private investors that reaped huge profits from two dubious development projects in the city of Seongnam, where he had

been mayor. He is also indicted on charges that he pressured a local businessman into sending millions of dollars in illegal payments to North Korea while attempting to set up a visit to the country that never materialized. The ruling Monday at the Seoul court was about whether Lee pressured a former employee of Seongnam into giving false testimony in court in 2019. The testimony was meant to downplay Lee's 2002 conviction that, as a lawyer, he had helped a journalist of KBS television to impersonate a prosecutor to secure an interview with then-Seongnam Mayor Kim Byung-ryang over corruption suspicions regarding the allocation of new apartments.

Lee was later elected as Seongnam's mayor in 2010

and held the job until 2018. While running for Gyeonggi provincial governor in 2018, Lee said he had been wrongly accused over the incident, prompting prosecutors to indict him on charges of violating election laws by making false statements during a campaigning period.

Lee was acquitted in 2019, partially based on the testimony of Kim Jin-sung, a Seongnam city employee, who had worked as Kim's secretary and said the former mayor contemplated dropping charges against KBS to establish Lee as the main culprit in the incident. □



South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung arrives at a court in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Nov. 25, 2024.

(Kim Hong-ji/Pool Photo via AP)

French mass rape trial prosecutors demand maximum sentence for Gisèle Pelicot's ex-husband

By John Leicester and Marine Lesprit

Associated Press

AVIGNON, France (AP) —

A mammoth rape trial in France moved into a new phase Monday as prosecutors began to lay out the verdicts and punishments they want for dozens of men accused of raping Gisèle Pelicot while she was drugged and rendered unconscious by her husband. After hearings stretching over nearly three months, the trial of 51 defendants in the southern city of Avignon is beginning to wrap up. Pelicot's courage during the harrowing proceedings has helped transform her into an icon, even beyond France, for campaigners fighting against sexual violence.

The public prosecutors started Monday by focusing on Dominique Pelicot, the man that 71-year-old Gisèle Pelicot was married to for nearly 50 years and who she believed was a loving, caring husband.

But he has admitted that for years he mixed sedatives into her food and drink so he could rape her and also invite dozens of strangers that he recruited online



Gisèle Pelicot speaks to media as she leaves the Avignon court house, southern France, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024.

to also rape her.

Prosecutor Laure Chabaud asked the panel of judges for the maximum possible penalty for aggravated rape 20 years against the victim's now ex-husband. Dominique Pelicot, who turns 72 this week, stared down at the floor, one hand on the handle of his cane, as the prosecutor spoke. The court is expect-

ed to deliver its verdicts by Dec. 20.

Gisèle Pelicot, who waived her right to anonymity, has pushed for graphic images that her husband filmed of the rapes to be presented in the courtroom, showing that she was unconscious and inert, audibly snoring.

"This woman was you, Madame Gisèle Pelicot, an ordinary woman," said

prosecutor Jean-François Mayet, turning to her, as he praised her courage and her desire to make shame change sides, so it falls on rapists and not their victims. He noted that Monday also marked the international day for the elimination of violence against women and said that France faces "a long path for our society to change its view of rape

culture."

Gisèle Pelicot sat quietly, sometimes staring up the ceiling, as the prosecutors detailed how Dominique Pelicot amassed and carefully catalogued a library of 20,000 photos and videos of the abuse that stretched over nearly a decade. The evidence that he stored on hard drives, memory sticks and phones led investigators to dozens of the men he recruited, although about 20 others haven't yet been identified.

All but one of the defendants are on trial for aggravated rape or attempted rape. In previous testimony, she said they treated her "like a rag doll, like a garbage bag."

"When did they ask the question of Madame Pelicot's consent? Not before. Not during," Mayet said.

Members of the public who hoped to witness the proceedings and lined up outside booed some defendants as they entered the courthouse, yelling, "We recognize you" and "Shame." Banners that campaigners hung opposite the building read "20 years for each of them" and "a rape is a rape." □

(AP Photo/Lewis Joly, File)

10 children killed by security forces in Mozambique's election protests, Human Rights Watch says

By Gerald Imray

Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa

(AP) — Mozambique security forces killed at least 10 children and injured dozens of others while trying to suppress weeks of protests following a disputed presidential election, Human Rights Watch said Monday. Hundreds of other minors were detained by security forces, some of them for days in violation of international law, since election results were announced a month ago, the rights group said.

The southern African country has been beset by unrest after the ruling party's candidate was declared the winner of the Oct. 9

election despite claims of fraud by the opposition and criticism of the vote by international observers, including a team from the European Union.

Mozambican authorities have not given out details on how many people have been killed or detained in the protests, but said some of the demonstrations



A barricade burns Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024 in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024 in protests that have engulfed the country after the opposition rejected the results of the country's polls which saw the Frelimo party extend its 58-year rule.

AP Photo/Carlos Uqueio)

turned violent and had to be quelled by security forces. Daniel Chapo was announced the winner of the election on Oct. 24, extending the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique party's unbroken half-century rule since independence from Portugal in 1975. Chapo is set to succeed President Filipe Nyusi, who has served the maximum two terms. The leftist party, known as Frelimo, has often been accused of rigging elections to remain in power. There were violent protests after last year's local elections, but these demonstrations have been the biggest challenge to Frelimo's long rule. The protests spilled into the streets in the capital,

Maputo, and other major cities after two senior opposition figures were killed by unknown gunmen in a late-night shooting on Oct. 18 that their party called a political assassination.

Since then, thousands have responded to regular calls for protests on social media from independent presidential candidate Venancio Mondlane, who lost to Chapo. Mondlane has left the country over fears for his safety, he said, after his lawyer was one of the two opposition members killed when the car they were in was ambushed and riddled with bullets on a street in Maputo. No arrests have been made in those killings. □

Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to

make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the highway before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout) Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is

used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road



becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work dif-

ferently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐

Experience Aruban culture with this exciting theme night featuring a Carnival show, mixology bar, local artists and more. You can sample Aruban cuisine, including delicious BBQ options with a tropical twist. A local brass band will be performing, and you can pose with elaborately dressed Carnival dancers for a memorable photo op as well, so don't miss it.

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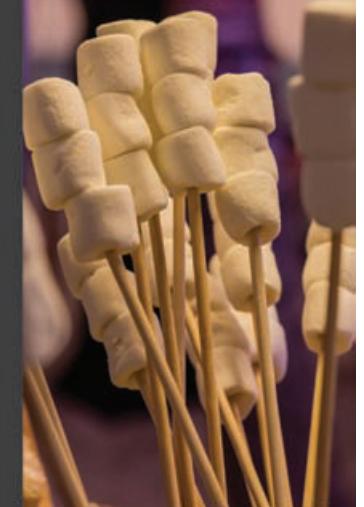
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Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, Holocen-

trus adscensionis:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.



The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as

color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □

Birds of Aruba



ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of



The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.



Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory.
English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male)
Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje).
Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect. □

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Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shore-

line, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!*

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky



stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

Hooiberg Hill

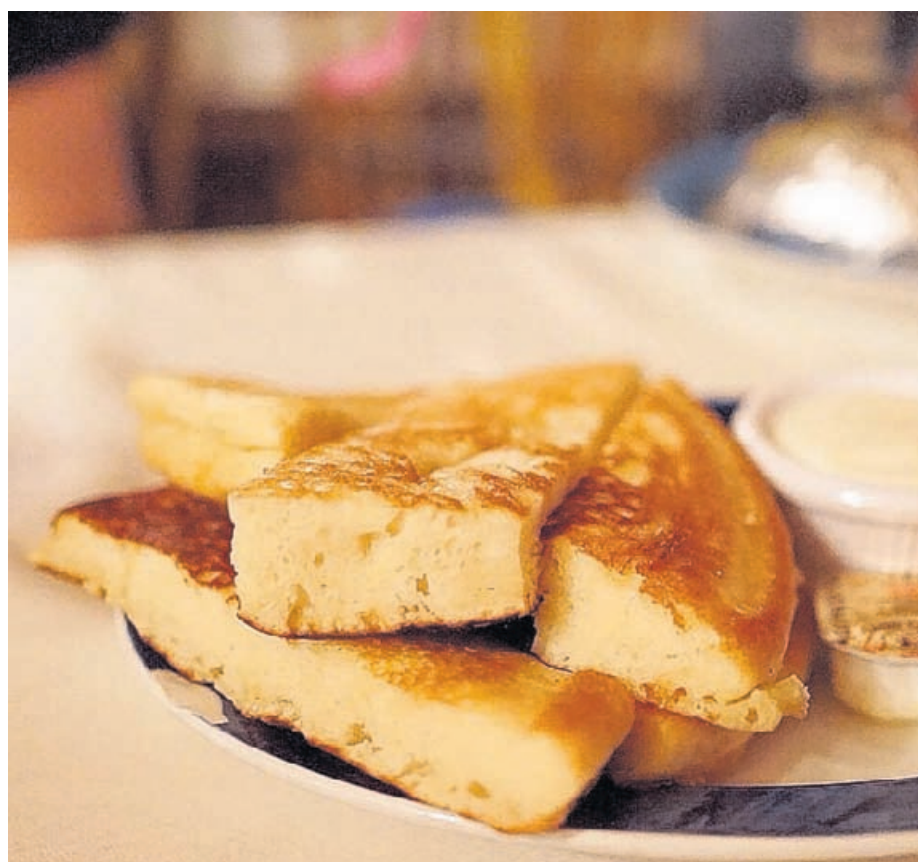
These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this in-

credible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...☐



Dining in? Try making a local favorite How to make "pan bati"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal (we recommend the Harina PAN brand)
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl

first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moister is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top!☐

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves.

The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he

needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about



his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but



powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

According to the website of Royal Aruba Aloe, Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the

plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance

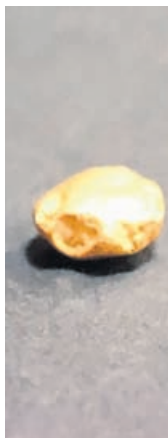


of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



In celebration of 200 years of the Aruban gold rush: Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba



(Oranjestad)—This year we celebrate a few milestone anniversaries on Aruba, one of them being the 200th anniversary of when gold was first discovered on the island. We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself. It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rooi Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold.

When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rooi Fluit, Hadicouradi and later West punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing traces of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekinchi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession, along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first wave of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

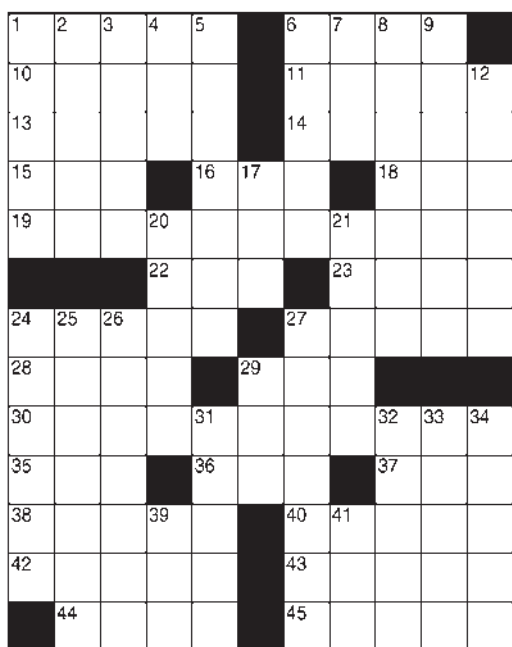
- ACROSS**
- 38 Dance of
 - 1 Bishop's headgear
 - 6 Com-ponent
 - 10 Japanese cartoon genre
 - 11 Use, as force
 - 13 Return to base
 - 14 Not in a million years
 - 15 Female sheep
 - 16 Singer Reed
 - 18 Water, in France
 - 19 Computer connectors
 - 22 Deli bread
 - 23 Slimming plan
 - 24 Book of maps
 - 27 Must have
 - 28 Casual talk
 - 29 In shape
 - 30 Some dishes
 - 35 Stretch of years
 - 36 Soaking spot
 - 37 Derby or fedora



Saturday's answer

DOWN

- 1 Partners
- 2 Deeply impressed
- 3 Bengal cat
- 4 Australian bird
- 5 Sportscast segments
- 6 Confine
- 7 Chopping tool
- 8 Daydream
- 9 Picked up the tab
- 12 Has faith in
- 17 Bullfight cry
- 20 Furious
- 21 Beethoven's "Joy"
- 24 Means of approach
- 25 Shrink's specialty
- 26 Wyoming city
- 27 Wee bites
- 29 Winter bug
- 31 Even a little
- 32 Marine mammal
- 33 "C'est —!"
- 34 Like cliffs
- 39 — canto
- 41 Building wing



11-27

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-27

CRYPTOQUOTE

SV LKX MBOGA EKZBWJSAD

ABI BHBGL NOL, LKX YOA

WBOYJ EKZBWJSAD ABI BHBGL

NOL. — ZOGWJO EWBIOW

Saturday's Cryptoquote: ONE PRESS ACCOUNT SAID I WAS AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS. I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE LONGEST NIGHT I'VE EVER SPENT. — SANDRA CISNEROS

Cruise ship Schedule: November 22 - 30 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
FRI	22	OCEANIA INSIGNIA	07.00	13.00	C	1
SAT	23	ROYAL CLIPPER	10.00	18.00	B	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	C	1
SUN	24	JEWEL OF THE SEAS	07.00	17.00	C	1
		EURODAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-
TUE	26	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
		WIND STAR	06.00	15.00	G	1
		MSC DIVINA	08.00	22.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
WED	27	SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	10.00	22.00	I	1
		OCEANIA INSIGNIA	07.00	16.00	B	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	30	EXPLORER OF THE SEAS	16.30	****	C	1
		CORAL PRINCESS	08.00	17.00	B	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

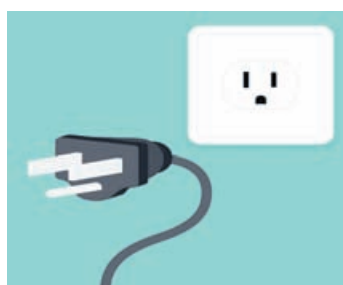
Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7

Warren Buffett gives away another \$1.1B and plans for distributing his \$147B fortune after his death

By Josh Funk
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Investor Warren Buffett renewed his Thanksgiving tradition of giving by announcing plans Monday to hand more than \$1.1 billion of Berkshire Hathaway stock to four of his family's foundations, and he offered new details about who will be handing out the rest of his fortune after his death.

Buffett has said previously that his three kids will distribute his remaining \$147.4 billion fortune in the 10 years after his death, but now he has also designated successors for them because it's possible that Buffett's children could die before giving it all away. He didn't identify the successors, but said his kids all know them and agree they would be good choices.

"Father time always wins. But he can be fickle — indeed unfair and even cruel — sometimes ending life at birth or soon thereafter while, at other times, waiting a century or so before paying a visit," the 94-year-old Buffett said in a letter to his fellow shareholders. "To date, I've been very lucky, but, before long, he will get around to me. There is, however, a downside to my good fortune in avoiding his notice. The expected life span of my children has materially diminished since the 2006 pledge. They are now 71, 69 and 66." Buffett said he still has no interest in creating dynastic wealth in his family a view shared by his first and current wives. He acknowledged giving Howard, Peter and Susie millions over the years, but he has long said he believes "hugely wealthy parents should leave their children enough so they can do anything but not enough that they can do nothing." The secret to building up such massive wealth over time has been the power of compounding interest and the steady growth of the Berkshire conglomer-



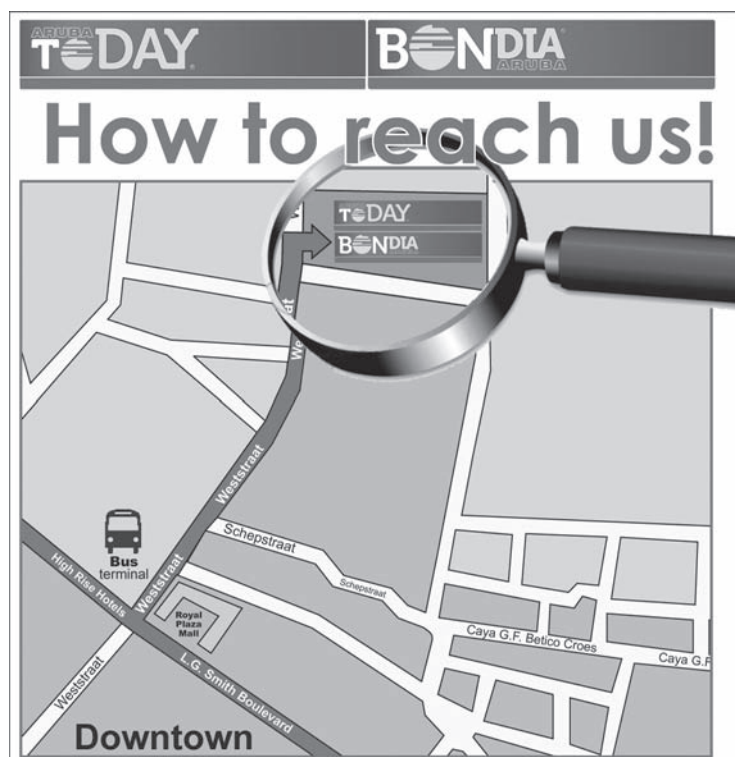
The children of Berkshire Hathaway Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett, from left, Howard Buffett, Susie Buffett, and Peter Buffett, pose for a photo at the CenturyLink Center exhibit hall in Omaha, Neb., May 1, 2015.

(AP Photo/Nati Harnik, File)

ate Buffett leads through acquisitions and smart investments like buying billions of dollars of Apple shares as iPhone sales continued to drive growth in that company. Buffett never sold any of his Berkshire stock over the years and also resisted the trappings of wealth and never indulged in much preferring instead to continue living in the same Omaha home he'd bought decades earlier and drive sensible luxury sedans about 20 blocks to work each day.

"As a family, we have had everything we needed or simply liked, but we have not sought enjoyment from the fact that others craved

what we had," he said. If Buffett and his first wife had never given away any of their Berkshire shares, the family's fortune would be worth nearly \$364 billion — easily making him the world's richest man — but Buffett said he had no regrets about his giving over the years. The family's giving began in earnest with the distribution of Susan Buffett's \$3 billion estate after her death in 2004, but really took off when Warren Buffett announced plans in 2006 to make annual gifts to the foundations run by his kids along with the one he and his wife started, as well as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. □



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Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

A Louis Armstrong relative steps up to help portray the music icon on Broadway

By Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The new stage musical about Louis Armstrong on Broadway opens with the jazz icon in a rehearsal room alongside an anonymous piano player. Keep an eye on the guy on keys.

Audiences may not know it, but there are actually two Armstrongs onstage at that moment the actor playing the great trumpeter and one of his real-life descendants. In an act of casting kismet, the piano player is Brandon Louis Armstrong, the music giant's great-great nephew.

"That moment always feels like I get to as Brandon speak to my great-great uncle from beyond," he says. "I get to just spend a moment in conversation with him and ask if he's OK and hear his voice."

The younger Armstrong is making his Broadway debut in "A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical," playing multiple parts, including a piano player, a teacher and as an understudy for Louis Armstrong himself.

"I was cautious about how I'd be able to step into this world and connect with part of my family history and my lineage," he says. "I'm so grateful and so thankful and so happy."

Behind the smile "A Wonderful World" starring Tony Award-winner James Monroe Iglehart and sometimes James T.



Brandon Louis Armstrong appears on stage in the musical "A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical" in New York. (Jeremy Daniel via AP)



James Monroe Iglehart portrays Louis Armstrong during a performance in "A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical" in New York. (Jeremy Daniel via AP)

Lane in the title role is a stage bio of one of jazz's most influential figures, a musician known for "Hello, Dolly," "Cheek to Cheek" and "A Wonderful World." The musical looks behind his wide smile to dig into his rise from poverty, his four marriages and battles with

form.

"I grew up with a lot of jazz playing in the household, a lot of gospel, a lot of R&B, a lot of hip-hop. My mom was also really big into like '80s hair metal bands and stuff like that," he says. "I'd go from listening to Motown to like listening to Guns n' Roses and then Kenny Rogers. It just was always a tapestry of music."

He was enchanted by his high school show choir and got invited to join all boys got in because muscles were needed to lift the girls and was later stunned by seeing a regional theater production of the classic musical "Ragtime."

"I was so moved by it, I just was like, 'I don't care if I'm the person sweeping the floors when it's over. I just want to be a part of whatever that is,'" he recalls.

He graduated from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy and after some local stage work including playing Donkey in "Shrek" landed on the third national tour of "Hamilton," which kicked off in 2019 in Puerto Rico starring Lin-Manuel Miranda.

No name dropping Armstrong didn't lean into his family name to get ahead. Press interviews when he broke out didn't even mention his famous pedigree. "I never, surprisingly, thought to ever lead with that," he says. "In this particular show, it's inescapable." □

racism from the Klansmen of New Orleans to the thugs of Chicago to Hollywood's bigots. He emerges from it a transcendent force, warts and all.

"The messaging behind it is that jazz is the choices that we make in between the notes," says the younger Armstrong. "It's not about making the right choice every time. It's about making a choice and allowing yourself to be present wherever those choices may lead you."

Show choir and 'Hamilton' The younger Armstrong was born and raised in Los Angeles. His home was always filled with music, but no one in his immediate family is a musician or wanted to per-

South African dissident writer and poet Breyten Breytenbach dies at 85

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South African writer and poet Breyten Breytenbach, a staunch opponent of the former white-minority government's apartheid policy of racial oppression, has died in Paris, his family announced Sunday. He was 85.

Breytenbach was a celebrated wordsmith, a leading voice in literature in Afrikaans, an offshoot of Dutch that was developed by white settlers, and a fierce critic of apartheid that was imposed against the country's Black majority between 1948 and 1990.

He moved to Paris but on a clandestine trip to his home country in 1975 he was arrested on allegations that he assisted Nelson Mandela's then-outlawed African National Congress group in its sabotage campaign against the white-minority government.

He was convicted of treason and served seven years in prison. Upon his release he based himself in Paris, where he continued his anti-apartheid activism.

Breytenbach is best known for "Confessions of an Albino Terrorist," his account of his imprisonment and the events leading to it. □



South African writer Breyten Breytenbach, right, and American actor and singer Harry Belafonte shake hands during a press conference in Paris, on June 18, 1986. (AP Photo, File)

Two US senators urge FIFA not to pick Saudi Arabia as 2034 World Cup host over human rights risks

By Graham Dunbar
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Two United States senators urged FIFA on Monday not to pick Saudi Arabia as the 2034 World Cup host next month in a decision seen as inevitable since last year despite the kingdom's record on human rights.

Democrats Ron Wyden of Oregon and Dick Durbin of Illinois have told FIFA president Gianni Infantino in a letter "we urge you to seek out a host country with a record of upholding human rights."

Saudi Arabia has been the only candidate for 2034 since FIFA unexpectedly opened a fast-track nomination process in October last year.

The contest seemed designed by FIFA for the Saudi bid to win, despite needing to build most of the 15 stadiums needed that risks repeating labor rights issues seen in Qatar over a decade of intense scrutiny before the 2022 World Cup. On Dec. 11, at an online



FIFA President Gianni Infantino reacts after he delivers a speech during the Asian Football Confederation or AFC Annual Award Seoul 2023, ceremony at the Grand Peace Palace in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2024.

meeting, more than 200 FIFA member federations are expected to jointly endorse by acclamation the Saudi bid plus the only candidate for the 2030 edition. That is a co-hosting plan by Spain, Portugal and Moroc-

co with single games going to Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

"Approving Saudi Arabia's bid this December endangers workers, athletes, tourists, and members of the press, and it runs coun-

ter to FIFA's own human rights policies," Wyden and Durbin wrote in a letter seen by The Associated Press.

"The kingdom continues to torture dissidents, engage in extrajudicial killings, discriminate against the LG-

BTQ+ community, oppress women and religious minorities, exploit and abuse foreign workers, and restrict almost all political rights and civil liberties," the letter claimed.

Those concerns were aired by United Nations members at the Human Rights Council in January when Saudi Arabia's track record was examined.

At that session in Geneva, Saudi government officials pointed to dozens of reforms in favor of women and a wider modernizing of its society under the Vision 2030 program pushed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

FIFA's Infantino has worked to build close ties to the crown prince over several years.

The soccer body's World Cup sponsor deal in April with Saudi state oil firm Aramco signaled a deeper financial relationship ahead of the 2026 edition being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. □

(AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

Michigan State engineering prof, student design helmet inserts to help drown out crowd noise for QBs

By Mike Householder
Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The sight was a common one for Andrew Kolpacki. For many a Sunday, he

would watch NFL games on TV and see quarterbacks putting their hands on their helmets, desperately trying to hear the play call from the sideline or booth as

tens of thousands of fans screamed at the tops of their lungs.

When the NCAA's playing rules oversight committee this past spring approved the use of coach-to-player helmet communications in games for the 2024 season, Kolpacki, Michigan State's head football equipment manager, knew the Spartans' QBs and linebackers were going to have a problem.

Kolpacki reached out to Tamara Reid Bush, a mechanical engineering professor who not only heads the school's Biomechanical Design Research Laboratory but also is a football season ticket-holder.

Kolpacki "showed me some photos and said that other teams had just put duct tape inside the (ear-hole), and he asked me, 'Do you think we can do



A 3D printer creates helmet inserts at Michigan State University's Biomechanical Design Research Laboratory, Monday, Nov. 18, 2024, in East Lansing, Mich.

(AP Photo/Mike Householder)

anything better than duct tape,?" Bush said. "And I said, 'Oh, absolutely.'" Bush and Rylie DuBois, a sophomore biosystems engineering major and undergraduate research assistant at the lab, set out

to produce earhole inserts made from polylactic acid, a bio-based plastic, using a 3D printer. Part of the challenge was accounting for the earhole sizes and shapes that vary depending on helmet style. □



Andrew Kolpacki, Michigan State University's head football equipment manager, surveys players' helmets located on a table inside the school's football complex, Monday, Nov. 18, 2024, in East Lansing, Mich.

(AP Photo/Mike Householder)

Saquon Barkley sets Eagles franchise record with 255 yards rushing, 2 TDs in a 37-20 win over Rams

By Greg Beacham
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)

— When Saquon Barkley glanced up at a SoFi Stadium replay of his latest huge run for the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night, he happened to see a graphic indicating he had 173 yards rushing only 16 shy of what he knew to be his career high.

"I said, 'Aw, I wish I never saw that,'" Barkley said with a grin.

"That's just the devil talking, that's how I look at it. ... I'm a big believer that if it happens, it happens. Just let it come to you."

Barkley decided to continue to run for his teammates, not for records. A few carries later, both his personal best and several additional superlatives fell right to him with his second massive touchdown run on a historic night.

Barkley ran for scores of 70 and 72 yards in the second half and finished with an Eagles-record 255 yards rushing in Philadelphia's seventh consecutive victory, 37-20 over the Los Angeles Rams.

Barkley racked up the ninth-most yards rushing in a game in NFL history largely thanks to his huge TD runs



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley (26) runs for a touchdown against the Los Angeles Rams during the second half of an NFL football game in Inglewood, Calif., Sunday, Nov. 24, 2024. (AP Photo/Ryan Sun)

bookending the second half. He sprinted for a 70-yard score on the opening snap of the third quarter, and he added another huge run up the middle with 2:44 to play.

"Saquon has that ability to hit home runs, and so sometimes that's how it goes," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said.

"You get some short gain, short gain, short gain boom, home run. Saquon is that type of player, and our

offensive line did a good job of handling the variations of the front."

Barkley had 302 total yards becoming the 12th player in NFL history to top 300, and the first Eagles player while also becoming the first NFL player with two 70-yard TD runs in a game since Maurice Jones-Drew in 2009.

Barkley leads the league with a career-best 1,392 yards rushing, including a league-best seven 100-

yard rushing games in his seismic first season with Philadelphia after six frustrating years with the Giants.

"To be honest, I'm not surprised," said Barkley, a two-time Pro Bowl selection. "I didn't know I would have this much success, (but) I'm thankful to be here. I'm thankful for the fresh start. A big reason why I wanted to come here (is) I felt like this is a spot where I could rewrite my story and show everyone the type of player

that I feel like I can be and was meant to be, and it's working out right now."

While averaging 9.8 yards per carry, Barkley obliterated the Eagles franchise records of 217 yards rushing by LeSean McCoy in 2013 and 296 total yards by Duce Staley in 2000. He also had the biggest rushing performance ever against the Rams, exceeding DeMarco Murray's 253 yards for Dallas in 2011.

A.J. Brown caught six passes for 109 yards and a TD from Jalen Hurts, who threw for 179 yards while NFC East-leading Philadelphia (9-2) surged in a 24-point second half.

Kyren Williams rushed for a score and Demarcus Robinson caught a TD pass for the Rams (5-6), who lost their second straight home game.

Matthew Stafford passed for 243 yards while getting sacked five times by Philadelphia's top-ranked defense, and Los Angeles couldn't keep up with a Super Bowl contender in the second half of only its second loss in six games.

Puka Nacua had nine catches for 117 yards, and Cooper Kupp caught a 27-yard touchdown pass with 1:07 to play. □

14-time Olympic medalist Emma McKeon retires from swimming

Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP)

— Emma McKeon, Australia's most decorated Olympian, announced her retirement from competitive swimming on Monday.

McKeon holds the Australian record of 14 Olympic medals six of them gold won over three Summer Olympics, while her seven-medal haul at Tokyo 2020 is the most ever by a female swimmer at a single Games and equal most for any female athlete from any sport at a single Olympics.

The 30-year-old McKeon had previously hinted that the 2024 Paris Games where she won gold in the 4 x 100m freestyle relay would be her final Olym-

pics, but she had not said whether she would contin-

ue to swim competitively.

"I am proud of myself for

giving my swimming career absolutely everything, both physically and mentally. I wanted to see what I was capable of, and I did," McKeon said on social media.

"Swimming has given me so much. From the dream igniting at 5 years old, right through to my third Olympic games - I have so many lessons, experiences, friendships and memories that I am so thankful for." McKeon's 14 medals came across the Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Games, with six Olympic gold, three silver and five bronze.

She's second only to Katie Ledecky in terms of Olympic swimming gold medals won.

The American has won nine across four Olympics in her tally of 14.

"Emma has added her own incredible chapter to Australia's history at the Olympic Games," Australian Olympic Committee President Ian Chesterman said in a written statement. "Emma has been an extraordinary athlete who has etched herself a special place in Australian sporting landscape, particularly through her success at the Olympics."

"Her performances during Tokyo were particularly stunning. Emma is recognised not just in Australia, but around the world, as one of the greatest Olympians ever." □



Emma McKeon of Australia poses after winning the gold medal in the Women's 50 meters butterfly final during the swimming competition of the Commonwealth Games, at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Birmingham, England, Monday, Aug. 1, 2022. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)